

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please cancel claims 1-9.

Please enter the following new claims.

10. (New) A distribution strip for use in an absorbent structure comprising cellulosic fibers selected from the group consisting of cotton linters, mercerized cellulose, chemically treated cellulose and mixtures thereof, wherein the chemically treated cellulose is treated with a polyvalent ion selected from the group consisting of aluminum, calcium, magnesium and mixtures thereof, and the distribution strip has a basis weight of between 45 grams per square meter and 140 grams per square meter and has a density of between 0.25 grams per cubic centimeter and 0.55 grams per cubic centimeter.

11. (New) The distribution strip of claim 10, wherein the distribution strip has a basis weight of between 75 grams per square meter and 110 grams per square meter.

12. (New) The distribution strip of claim 10, wherein the distribution strip is made by a wet-laid process.

13. (New) The distribution strip of claim 10, wherein the distribution strip is made by an air-laid process.

14. (New) The distribution strip of claim 10, wherein one hour after three

100 ml insults to the structure at 20 minute intervals in a last three inches of the fluid storage layer longitudinal and transverse horizontal wicking test, the fluid storage layer has horizontal wicking of 22 g/g or greater.

15. (New) The distribution strip of claim 10, wherein the distribution strip has a fluid distribution rate of 0.05 grams per second or greater.

#### REMARKS

Claims 1-9 are cancelled. New claims 10-15 are now pending.

New claims 10-15 are fully supported in the specification. Support for claims 10-15 can be found on page 3, line 21 to page 4, line 10; page 7, Table 1; and on 8, Table 2 of the specification. No new matter is added by these claims.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra Lee  
Sandra S. Lee  
Reg. No. 51,932  
Attorney for Applicants

DARBY & DARBY, P.C.  
Post Office Box 5257  
New York, NY 10150-5257  
Phone (212) 527-7700

Serial No. TBA  
Preliminary Amendment

Docket No. 1313/1F698-US3  
Page 3